

Even readers with little knowledge of butterfly collecting can understand this is bad for collecting (or in more modern parlance "constitutes a sub-optimal entomological field situation"). Yet things get worse. The brightest kids will equip themselves with switches made from twigs and proceed to cut down any butterfly stupid enough to approach the advancing amoeba. Soon the bravest of the brightest will be approaching you with the horribly mangled remains of a *Danaus chrysippus*. The only viable course of action now is to give up. They will not tire; you will not catch a worthwhile butterfly.

But can you not reason with them? No! You may try, it won't help, though it might be amusing to do so. The sequence goes somewhat along the following lines. You sit down; everyone sits down. Smiles are exchanged. Soon the brightest of the brightest of the kids is pushed to the fore. He struggles visibly to overcome a level of stress which would provoke an immediate coronary attack in an older person, before exclaiming bravely: "What is yourrr name and from wherrre do you come?" and retreating to the relative safety of the wall of the amoeba. More often than not this will have exhausted the entire vocabulary available for dialogue. Audience response at such audacity is rapt. Grandfathers think that, but for one of the innumerable curses afflicting the Indian countryside, this could have been one of his own sons twenty years ago. The younger fathers' resolve to secure an education for their sons is visibly strengthened. And the horde of younger and more timid kids have an instant hero.

Try to explain — even with the help of a decent Hindi phrase-book — that you are in this godforsaken spot collecting butterflies for scientific reasons and that you prefer to be alone. No way! Even in the unlikely case that you could communicate the message it would be insufficient reason to abandon the enjoyment engendered by what could be the most exciting thing that has happened in the area since they chased away a government tax-collector three years ago.

Lesson. Try again, somewhere else. But be prepared for the same scenario.—TORBEN B. LARSEN, 23 Jackson's Lane, London N.6.

EXTRA INSTARS IN LYMANTRIID LARVAE. —With reference to Mrs. Reese's query (1981, *Ent. Rec.*, 92: 234), whilst I cannot say whether the extra larval instar in females of *Orgyia antiqua* L. has been noted previously, quite a number of Lymantriid species do have an extra larval instar in the female. I have records of this with the following species from my own breeding experiences:—*Pteredeia monsticta* Btlr., *Porthesia producta* Wlk., *P. dewitzi* Grunbg., *Euproctis fasciata* Wlk., *E. geminata* Collnt., *E. molundiana* Auriv., *E. discupuncta* Holl., *Area discalis* Wlk., *Dasychira ila* Swinh., *Nemerophanes libyra* Druce, *N. enos* Druce, *Orgyia basalis* Wlk., *O. mixta* Snell.

Oddly enough, Lasiocampid larvae do not appear to have this extra instar in female larvae, although the size disparity between the sexes in the imago is often even greater than in the Lymantriidae. —D.G. SEVASTOPULO, F.R.E.S., P.O. Box 95617, Mombasa (Nyali), Kenya.

EARLY APPEARANCES OF THE RED ADMIRAL, *VANESSA ATALANTA* LINN. IN S. E. KENT. — On 28th March 1981 I watched a rather worn *Vanessa atalanta* flying among the bushes lining a ride in Longrope Wood, Orlestone. Its behaviour was somewhat similar to that of *Polygonia c-album*, several of which were flying and basking in the rides at the same time. Warm southerly winds were rather common during March, though the weather was frequently dull and wet, so it seems quite possible that this butterfly was an early migrant.

On the other hand, I have a record of an *atalanta* being seen by Mr. E. M. R. Jago at Lympne, Kent on 10th February 1980, flying in sunshine in his garden when the temperature was about 10°C. It seems more likely that this was a hibernator though whether it can be considered a "successful" hibernator or not I would not like to say. It still had to survive the typical Kentish spring of recent years, something which a number of species of butterfly are apparently unable to do — M. ENFIELD, New Cottage, Warren Farm, Boughton Aluph, Ashford, Kent TN25 4HW.

LARVAE OF THE YELLOW SHELL: *CAMPTOGRAMMA BILINEATA* L. FEEDING IN NATURE ON *CARDAMINE FLEXUOSA* WITH. (CRUCIFERAE). — During the evening of May 7th, 1981, a green geometrid larva was noticed on this plant during weeding operations, and search after dark revealed two more, all of which were bred. The *C. flexuosa* had formed a dense patch to the exclusion of other plant species since the previous summer, and was of several square feet in extent in my garden at Dartford, Kent, thus making it likely that this was also the larval foodplant before hibernation.

It seems that larvae of *C. bilineata* are rarely found. E. Newman (*The Natural History of British Moths*, 1869) states "The caterpillar appears to have been seldom observed until M. Guenée gave us the clue to its discovery; it feeds on different grasses by night, secreting itself during the day on the underside of stones, under clods of earth, or at the roots of the herbage." C. Barrett [*The Lepidoptera of the British Islands*, 1895-1902] lists chickweed, dock, sorrel, strawberry, dandelion, rest harrow and various grasses. R. South (*The Moths of the British Isles*, 1939 ed.) after listing grass, dock, chickweed, and various low-growing plants as foodplants states that the larvae are often abundant in hay fields. More recently horse chestnut is given as foodplant in Surrey by L. Evans (L. and K. Evans, *A Survey of the Macro-Lepidoptera of Croydon and N.E. Surrey*, 1973), this apparently by a single larva.

The Dartford record is interesting in that this seems to be the first time *C. bilineata* larvae have been observed on a cruciferous plant. — B. K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Bexley, Kent.